

Little White Kitten



Little White Kitten

Written by Ma Yue
Illustrated by Jiang Cheng'an



Zhaohua Publishing House
Beijing, 1985



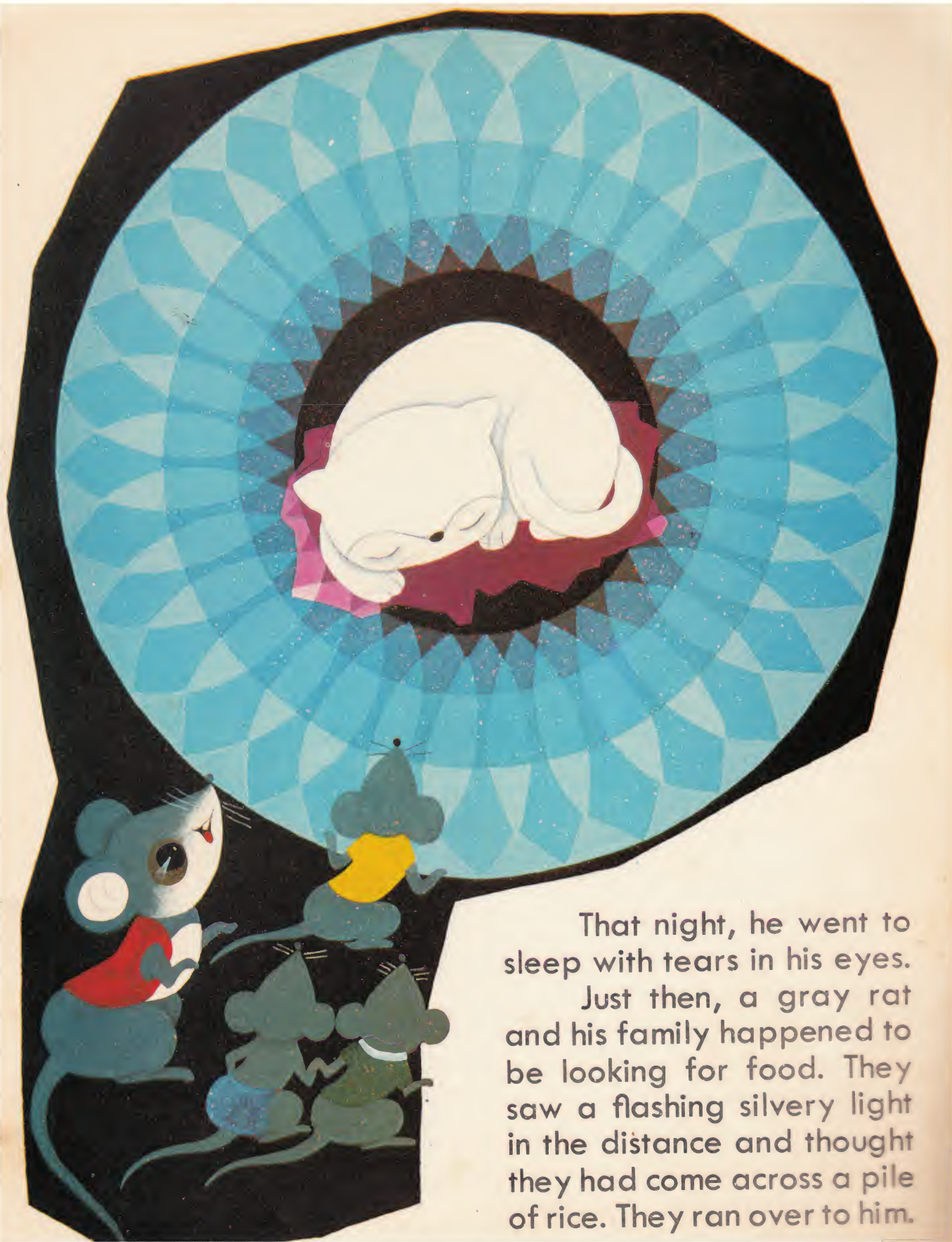
Once upon a time, there was a pretty white kitten with long whiskers and bright, round eyes. He gave out a silvery light in the dark.

This white kitten was very proud of himself and didn't want to learn anything new.





One day, an earthquake destroyed everything he owned. Sitting by himself on the ruins, he felt cold and hungry. He put his paws around himself and groaned miserably.



That night, he went to sleep with tears in his eyes.

Just then, a gray rat and his family happened to be looking for food. They saw a flashing silvery light in the distance and thought they had come across a pile of rice. They ran over to him.



The gray rat suddenly stopped
and pricked up his ears.

Goodness, it was a white kitten!
He was fast asleep, dreaming of a
feast.

A rat tiptoed towards the kitten, sniffing around. His sharp, stiff whiskers woke the kitten up, who was disgusted at this sharp-toothed monster with dancing eyes. He mewed at the nasty animal.





Seeing the kitten could do nothing but mew, the rats closed in on him.

The kitten didn't know what to do and was finally taken away.



From then on, the rats forced him to lead the way every night to steal turnips from Aunt Rabbit, eat Aunt Yellow Hen's eggs, and bite holes in Grandpa's sweet potatoes. The kitten was given only rotten food or potato peels to eat. She became thinner and thinner.

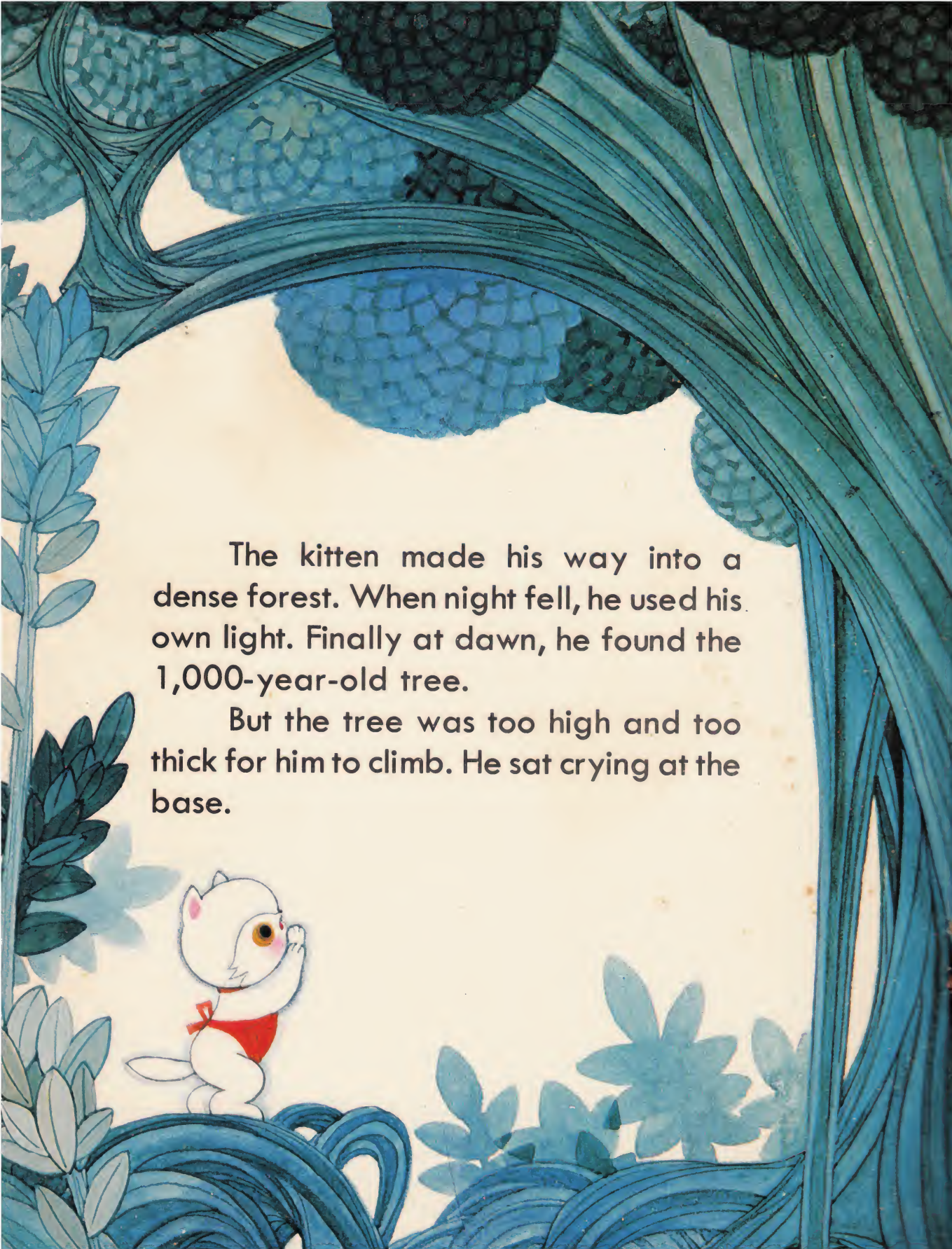


One morning, a little rat fell ill. The father rat sent for the pest doctor.





"Your child needs a crow's egg, an egg laid on a 1,000-year-old tree," said the pest doctor swinging her slender body. The rat turned to the kitten and bellowed, "Go and find one, or we'll kill you!"

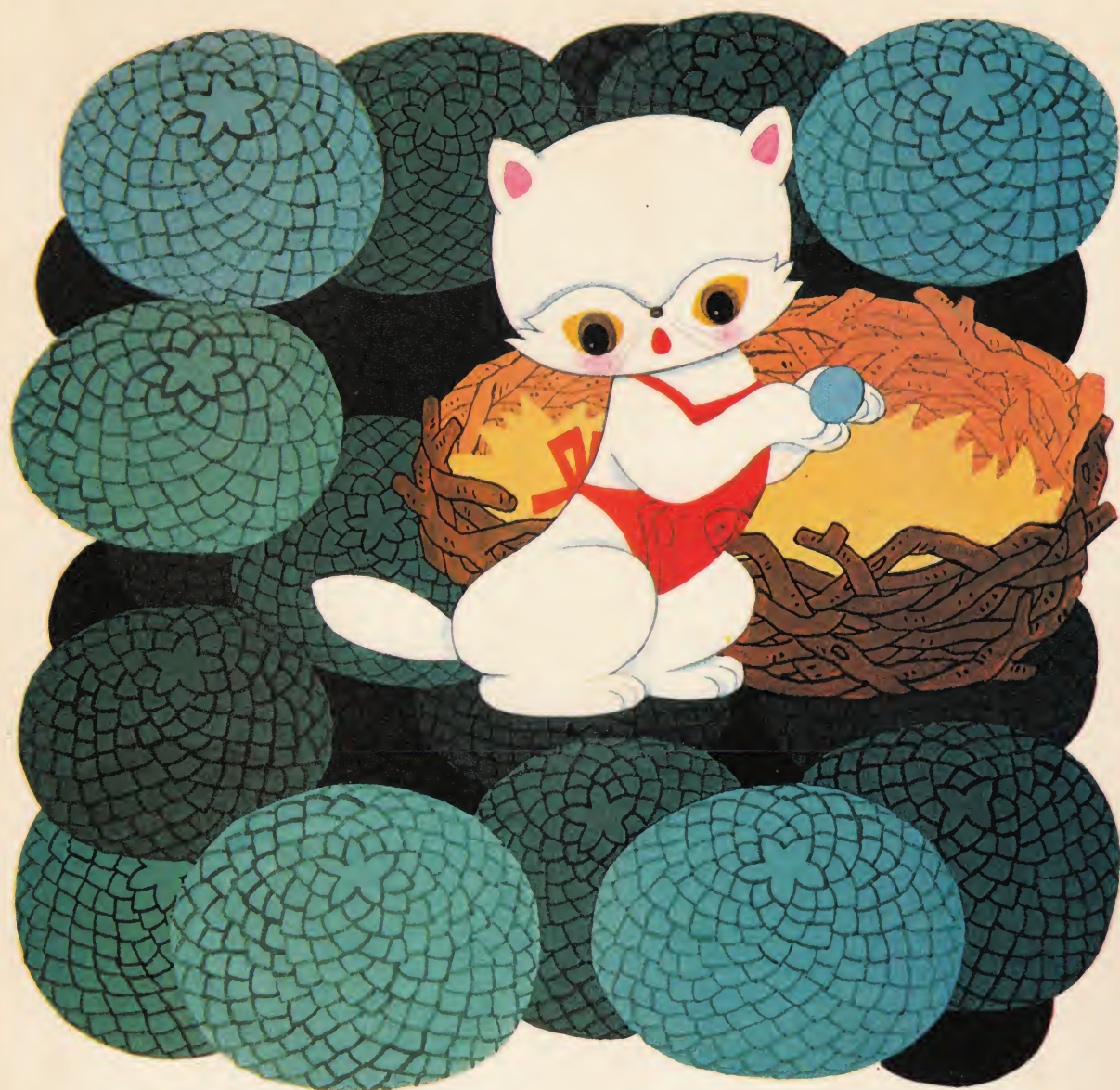
A white kitten with a red bow is sitting on a large, dark green leaf. The kitten is looking up at a large, gnarled tree trunk that dominates the right side of the frame. The background is a light yellowish-green, suggesting a forest floor or sky. The tree trunk is thick and textured, with many smaller branches and leaves visible in the background.

The kitten made his way into a dense forest. When night fell, he used his own light. Finally at dawn, he found the 1,000-year-old tree.

But the tree was too high and too thick for him to climb. He sat crying at the base.



Suddenly, Grandpa Tree said to him, "White kitten, you should be able to climb trees and catch mice. But you are spoiled and lazy. That's why you can do nothing." Then, the tree leaned down with one of his branches and lifted the kitten up into the air.



The kitten got the crow's egg, but didn't know how to get back down again. Just then, he saw a drop of water falling along a branch down to the ground. It bounced for a moment and then disappeared into the soil.

The white kitten followed suit and successfully got down from the tree. Overjoyed, he clapped his paws.



The crow's egg got broken, and left a dark stain on the ground. He was disgusted by it, and thought of his sufferings at the hands of the gray rats and the pest doctor. Angrily, he turned around.





While walking, he said to himself, "What the Grandpa Tree said is right. I should not be such a coward. I must learn how to kill these rats." He stopped to teach himself jumping, scratching and climbing.



He kept practising for several days. Then he shook a dried cane and felt that he was stronger. He lowered his head and found a dark hole.



The white kitten crawled into the hole, and much to his surprise found piles of rice, preserved dates and peanuts.



He kept on walking, and caught sight of a beam of light from beneath a small door. He peered in through a crack and saw the rats having a banquet, with the pest doctor beside them saying flattering words.

"Let's toast to a rich and peaceful life!" said the old rat. The pest doctor said, "We haven't seen the white kitten for many days. He must have fallen from the tree and got killed."

A rat said, "Good! Then we'll never have any enemies!" They all roared with laughter.



They had hardly finished laughing when the white kitten bounced into the room and caught the old rat. He broke his whiskers and scratched a hole in the pest doctor's belly. He also punished all the other rats.





Then the white kitten jumped out of the hole into the sunlight. At last he felt he was truly pretty.

